

KENDRICK PARK DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Friday, April 8, 2011 –12:30 PM
Town Room, Town Hall
MINUTES

CITIZEN MEMBERS PRESENT: Peg Roberts, Marilyn Rodzwell, Hope Crolus,
Christina Mata and Susan Sheldon

CITIZEN MEMBERS ABSENT: Liz Rosenberg, Peter Blier, Alan Snow

STAFF PRESENT: Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director
Linda Chalfant, Director of LSSE
Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner

The meeting began at 12:30 p.m. in the Town Room, Town Hall.

Peg Roberts opened the meeting and asked if The Cecil Group could send us a “pdf” of the Schematic Plan once it has been prepared so that we can see it before it is presented to the Select Board.

Entrances and Paths

The entrance at the northeast corner should be made wider and more open to the street. It should encompass connections with the cross walks that cross Triangle and East Pleasant Streets. It can be widened near the street and pinched down soon thereafter. This will give people direct access from the crosswalks to the entry and give them room to stand while they wait to cross the street.

There should be a crosswalk across East Pleasant Street near the entrance to Bertucci’s. Where this new crosswalk connects with the park there should be another small entrance plaza, with benches, tables. This entrance plaza should be connected with the path that runs across the park just to the north of the performance area. This new small entry plaza will respond to the active district across the street.

We should explore the possibility of raising the crosswalks that cross East Pleasant Street in order to slow traffic in this area. This idea needs to be discussed with Police and Fire Departments and the DPW, but the possibility of raising the crosswalks should be noted on the plan.

The area across East Pleasant Street will eventually be developed more densely than it is now.

The west side of North Pleasant Street, to the west of the park, will also be developed in the future, possibly for mixed use, such as offices and residences. There could be condominiums here in the future. This area is messy and has trash strewn along it in the summer and is not well-cared-for now.

The path that runs across the park, north of the performance area, should have a connection with the play area.

Paths that meet at an acute angle should have a more gentle transition from one path to another.

Overhead Utilities

Angled parking may interfere with existing utility poles. In the short run, the poles will probably need to be moved. In the long run, it is recommended that the poles will come down and be replaced with underground wiring.

Trees

We would like to keep the major tree canopy. It would help, at the final presentation, to see a plan showing the existing trees. But we have to assume that some trees will be sacrificed. There is a Tree Inventory Plan and List available on the Town of Amherst website, on the Kendrick Park Committee page, under Appendix 7 of the Report to the Town Manager. It is available at the following link. The

trees on the Tree Inventory Plan were located using GPS, so it is a reasonably accurate representation of tree locations.

<http://www.amherstma.gov/index.aspx?NID=923>

There was so much public expression of love for the trees that they need to be acknowledged more. An overlay map showing trees would be helpful to see which trees will be affected by the design. Committee members acknowledged that the design can be altered to save certain specimen trees at a later stage of design development. Prior to work being done on design development and construction drawings, a survey will need to be done of the entire park, including exact locations and identification of all trees.

Pergola

There was discussion about the placement of the pergola, particularly about whether it should be moved to the north side of the performance area. The Committee decided by consensus to leave the pergola where it is currently shown, along the path between the southern main space and the performance/skating rink area. Committee members asked about the posts that will support the pergola and whether the posts will interfere with movement along the walkway. Committee members asked if the pergola should be made wider to span the entire walkway to avoid having posts in the center of the walk, or moved to one side to allow ease of passage along the path. Committee members also asked about whether maintenance vehicles would be able to pass under the pergola. There was some discussion about the shape of the pergola, and whether the pergola should be curved. However, the consensus was that the design of the pergola would come later in the process, during detailed design.

Public Art

There should be spaces for public art along the walkways, throughout the park.

Benches

There should be small spaces created for benches along the walkways. Also, there should be some benches at the edges of lawn areas. There should be benches around or next to the play area.

Wet area at southern end of park

This is a wet time of year. The area over the Tan Brook and the area that normally floods are very wet. We don't want a perpetually flooded path, so there is a need to solve this flooding problem.

North and South Entrances

The circular planters in the middle of the entry ways at the north and south ends of the park may not serve to welcome people into the park. Committee members felt that it would be better to have a more open, welcoming space at the entries, perhaps with seating walls at the edges, rather than a circular planter with seating walls in the middle. One member did a quick sketch of how this might work. It will be forwarded to the consultants along with these Minutes.

At the north entry space the wall that could be used to create the entry space might also be a retaining wall used to support the change in elevation where the entry space transitions to lawn/planted area.

Entries might also be marked with stone pillars of some sort. The Committee members who had visited Ashuelot Park in Keene, New Hampshire, liked the entryway there and asked if similar elements, low seating walls and stone pillars, could be used to mark the entrance to Kendrick Park. There should be some sort of "threshold" that people pass through to enter the park.

Multi-use spaces

There was discussion about the “un-programmed” spaces within the park and the fact that the Committee had told the designers that the spaces should be “multi-use” spaces. Some members of the Committee felt that the spaces were too “un-programmed” and wondered whether there should be a permanent stage installed in the performance space. Other members of the Committee felt that performers could bring their own stage.

In the end, Committee members thought that the town could have a portable, collapsible stage that could be set up when needed and removed when not needed. It would need to be stored somewhere in the interim. Committee members felt that it might be helpful to get input from acting/performing groups on what would work best. Members referred to the Porter Phelps – Huntington Museum in Hadley as a place that had performances of the scale that might be appropriate at Kendrick Park.

Committee members reiterated the fact that Kendrick Park doesn’t lend itself to large performances.

Funding

Ms. Chalfant, Director of LSSE, stated that there is an effort at the state level to change the rules for CPA funding to allow projects that are not purchased with CPA funds to be improved with CPA funds.

Committee members talked about organizing a Friends of Kendrick Park group to raise funds for the construction and maintenance of the park. Ms. Roberts noted that the town had already set up a fund to receive donations for Kendrick Park, but it was not known if any donations had been received to date.

Ms. Mata emphasized that it was important to enlist younger people in this fundraising effort because these would be the people who would support the park in the future.

Committee members discussed when it would be appropriate to start the campaign for funding, before other funding is acquired or after. Members thought that it would be helpful in applying for grants if we could show that there was already an effort underway to raise private fund. It was suggested that Eric Carle and other local children’s book authors could be approached.

Ms. Mata stated that she has some experience in fundraising. Ms. Brestrup offered to speak with the Town Manager, John Musante about his thoughts on fund raising. Ms. Brestrup also offered to investigate the fund raising efforts in Keene, N.H., that led to the construction of Ashuelot Park. Ms. Roberts noted that people may be willing to give money for specific parts of the park. Ms. Chalfant stated that if the story of Kendrick Park can be told, people may be willing to give a gift for historical purposes. Ms. Roberts noted that Jones Library receives funding from people remembering the Library in their wills. She also stated that it would be important to have a few initial contributions to start the fundraising. Committee members will contact Tony Maroulis to see if he has any advice for the Committee regarding fundraising.

Ms. Roberts stated that the development will probably be phased and that paths and benches should come first.

Ms. Roberts also stated that the Committee members should meet one more time prior to the final presentation to the Select Board.

Minutes of March 24, 2011

Ms. Chalfant noted that her name was not on the list of staff members who had attended the March 24th meeting. She had attended the meeting, but had arrived late and had signed in. Her name will be added to the list of staff members who attended.

April 8, 2011

Ms. Sheldon MOVED that the Minutes of the March 24, 2011, meeting of the Kendrick Park Design Advisory Committee be approved as amended. Ms. Mata seconded and the vote was unanimous.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at about 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Christine M. Brestrup, Senior Planner